

HELP DESK

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■ <http://www.nces.ed.gov/edi>

to download presentation material, read more about EDI, and check out some of the web site links and a whole lot more!

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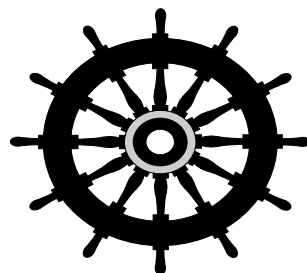
Speede Expression

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EDI: Charting the Course

Developing an Implementation Strategy

The second in a three-part series, this article provides guidance to EDI proponents on how to plan a successful implementation of an EDI program within their educational community. In Phase 1, the stakeholders will have been mobilized through educational activities, collaboration, and after determining the feasibility of utilizing EDI to streamline the records sharing process between organizations. Now your organization is ready to develop an implementation strategy for each participating institution.



1. **Decide institutional implementation strategy** - Since EDI can be implemented at various organizational levels, the first step is to decide how big that "first step" will be. Initially, consider all the opportunities for EDI in order to simplify multiple business processes within the organization. Once the candidate documents have been determined, set priorities for implementation based on need of the staff responsible for the current paper-based process.
2. **Obtain management approval** - Prepare a business case or statement showing the long and short term costs and benefits of EDI investment. The current paper-based processes will need to be reviewed to determine the cost of managing information exchange today. In addition, include examples of the indirect benefits of EDI to obtain management and support.
3. **Establish a project team** - The team will determine requirements, scope, and functional design of EDI implementation and should include representation from end users as well as technical staff.

(continued on page 3)

Charlotte's Beta

The NCES' sponsored WEB Server for EDI called Charlotte (Computer for Harmonizing Administrative Records between Learning Organizations Targeting Truth about Education) debuted as a demonstration server in February 1999. The Charlotte Server is designed to simplify the exchange of student information between educational agencies by using three specified methods of sending and receiving information-email, HTTP and the WEB.

During the initial phase of deployment, Charlotte will be beta tested by approximately 10 state and local educational agencies with the goal of fine-tuning the user and administrative interfaces and processes. Several state and school district representatives, who attended the Summer NCES Forum and Data Conference last July in Washington DC, stepped forward with interest to participate in beta testing after viewing the server demonstration. States involved include Arizona, Louisiana, New Hampshire, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

Charlotte grew out of an EDI pilot study in Washington state where both K12 and postsecondary were involved. During the study, the specific needs and problems of K12 and postsecondary in implementing EDI were observed to differ. K12's support and information infrastructure is far more distributed and requires much more assistance than the more centralized postsecondary institutions. Postsecondary institutions have an architecture and budget structure that will enable them, in many instances, to design and implement in-house solutions independent of Charlotte. Charlotte was designed to help the K12 institutions with limited capability to implement EDI. This does not mean that postsecondary institutions cannot use Charlotte, but simply, that they were not the initial primary target users. The basic design of the Charlotte beta version is to accept a fixed file format from "sending institutions" and create a valid electronic student record/transcript in X12 Transaction Set 130 format to send to postsecondary institutions. Charlotte will perform all required mapping and translation. The main reason for Charlotte's development is to help educational agencies implement X12 Transaction Sets. Since the architecture is flexible, the transaction sets can be adapted to most data and document types. Although Charlotte allows for varying formats, agencies are urged to adopt a common one, to avoid finding the cost of developing and maintaining their own unique maps prohibitive.



CASE IN POINT

Following the Progress of Iowa's Project

Looking back at the last "Case In Point" installment, the interview with Coleen McClanahan of Iowa's Project EASIER (Electronic Access System for Iowa Education Records), readers learned about their initial steps. Project EASIER is an EDI initiative to develop and implement a system for sharing essential student information among educational institutions and agencies. Coleen continues her Spotlight contribution by sharing the next steps toward EASIER's success. Steps six through twelve, as defined in "Charting the Course Toward EDI," are highlighted below.

Project EASIER Step 6 (Develop cost/benefit analysis):

A case study of cost/benefit analysis was shared with department personnel by an independent consultant hired to assist with the beginning stages of the project. No other formal analysis was done, but internal discussions included how the project would benefit the agency in cost savings. Reduction in data entry, the processing and handling of paper forms, and mailing costs were some of the identified benefits. In addition, similar savings will occur at the local district level.

Project EASIER Step 7 (Select participants/components):

To continue the enablement process, the Department of Education identified seven paper-based data collection documents that included student level data elements. From these documents, a set of 16 data elements was identified. The project team goal for the development of a set of data elements was to select a set that would be "significant, yet manageable". This set of 16 data elements met that criteria, and provide the information necessary to eliminate the need for required reports to be completed by participating sites. This set of data elements became the project's district-to-state data element list. Likewise, a committee composed of representatives from postsecondary institutions and the Department of Education identified a set of data elements needed for postsecondary transcripts that became the district-to-postsecondary data element list. Both of these lists were shared with and endorsed by the advisory council. At the November 29, 1995 advisory committee meeting, plans were announced to members that a pilot project involving sites from advisory committee representation would be implemented in January of 1996. At that time, all public school districts with representation on the advisory committee were invited to notify the Department of Education through a letter of intent if they had an interest in becoming a pilot site.

The Department of Education established a Project EASIER team at the beginning of the project. Individuals on the team include administrators, data processing and technology personnel, and a project coordinator. This team continues to function. It was the Project EASIER team that reviewed the letters of intent in accordance with pre-specified criteria and conducted follow-up team telephone interviews with potential pilot site candidates. Ultimately six pilot sites were identified.

Specific expectations for pilot sites included the following: 1) with technical assistance, conduct an initial EDI assessment to provide a foundation for future direction, 2) organize a pilot site team, 3) develop a site team plan, 4) participate in overall team meetings with other pilot sites, 5) communicate with the Department of Education and with other pilot sites, 6) record/report progress and share technical problems and issues with other site teams and the Department of Education, 7) develop cooperative agreements with other pilot sites and postsecondary institutions, and 8) transfer student data electronically to the Department of Education and postsecondary institutions.

Project EASIER Step 8 (Complete technical development):

The Iowa Department of Education was fortunate to have National Computer Systems (NCS) located in the state. National Computer Systems has been on the cutting edge of research and development in the area of electronic data interchange, SPEEDE/EXPRESS, and translation software development. The Department of Education contracted with this vendor for technical assistance. In addition, the department has added one full-time technology staff person to the project and has appointed a full-time coordinator as well. The department Project EASIER team also provides additional assistance.

Project EASIER Step 9 (Establish EDI trading partner agreements between organizations):

At an early stage, a decision was made not to go the route of formal trading partner agreements for Project EASIER. The nature of the entities involved lend themselves more to "cooperative agreements", which have evolved among the department, local school district sites, and the involved postsecondary institutions. As a result of on-going discussion, procedures, processes, and data element lists have been standardized. The data elements identified in Step 7 have been mapped to Transaction Set 130, and the results of this mapping effort has been agreed to by local school districts and the postsecondary institutions.

Project EASIER Steps 10, 11, & 12 (Pilot test, evaluate & review, implement):

Following the identification of the original pilot sites, and up to the present time, which is considered the "production" phase of the project, there has been constant testing, evaluating and review of project activities. This has been somewhat of an evolutionary process in that many unanticipated occurrences have developed along the way. Sometimes these developments would be positive and assist the forward movement of the project, and other times they would provide challenges calling for more in-depth study. The actual enablement process for sites includes built-in tests as the process is implemented. An example of such a test is as follows: Each site receives a copy of the encryption software with installation instructions. They also receive the department's public key and a file of test data. They are to install the encryption software, generate their key pairs, encrypt the test file provided by the department, and send that encrypted file as an e-mail attachment to the department. These steps test that the encryption software has successfully been installed, that the site can use it, and that there is Internet connectivity between the site and the department.

(continued from page 1)

4. **Educate personnel** - Because EDI has the potential of dramatically changing the way people work, they need to understand what EDI will do for them and why it is being done. Educating employees from the start and soliciting their support broadens ownership, ensures cooperation, and avoids later complications.
5. **Analyze data flow and modeling** - Use of these tools allow for a thorough understanding of the business process that will be automated through EDI. They are essential to ensure that all information required for an EDI transaction is present.
6. **Develop cost analysis** - Determine what the EDI implementation costs will be including hardware, EDI software, technical training, telecommunications, and personnel time. On-going costs such as network charges, hardware/software maintenance contracts, on-going training, and support personnel resources should also be estimated.
7. **Select participants/components for EDI pilot** - Engage in an EDI pilot test to ensure that meaningful and timely electronic exchange of information is achieved. When recruiting other organizations to participate, choose an institution that frequently shares information with your institution and that clearly and consistently articulates the necessary information.
8. **Complete technical development** - Allow 60-90 days for development which involves installing and configuring EDI software, creating maps that define the correlation between your local data and the standard, and in some cases, developing an application interface program that forms an electronic bridge between the EDI translator software and the administrative applications that house the data.
9. **Establish EDI trading agreements between organizations** - Formalize the exchange process and procedures by establishing a "trading partner agreement" to ensure a common understanding of what is expected of each participant. It should specify which EDI transaction sets and X12 Standards version to be exchanged, volume and schedule for transmissions, feedback process, and any other terms and conditions that are deemed appropriate.
10. **Pilot test** - Conduct both a pilot and parallel paper-based test so that the processes and the data content within the documents can be compared. Testing should continue until all problems are solved and both institutions are comfortable with the new process.
11. **Evaluate & review** - In the evaluation, issues should be identified and resolved to the satisfaction of everyone involved. Anticipate that the process will require some fine-tuning before moving into production level exchanges.
12. **Implement** - Prior to going live, announce this capability to other institutions with which typically large volumes of information is exchanged. Now as an EDI expert, offer your assistance in getting others EDI enabled. Remember: the more records you exchange electronically, the sooner you realize a return on investment (not to mention saving trees).

The final article in the series will focus on common issues, challenges, and recommended solutions for institutions as they begin building the administrative records transfer network.
-- Jill Hanson

Spotlight on VIPs in EDI

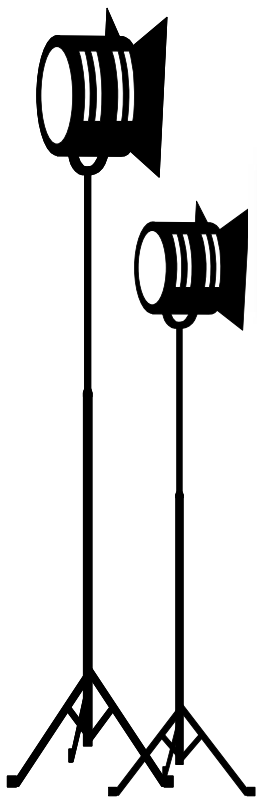
Lee Tack, Administrator of the Division of Financial and Information Services at the Iowa Department of Education, is this Spotlight's featured VIP in EDI. His contributions to the EDI for Education cause are endless.



In 1995, Lee attended the National Center for Education Statistics' annual MIS Data Conference and became aware of the potential of EDI to benefit schools and districts. He followed up with three registrars from Iowa's state universities who had already established trading partner agreements to exchange transcripts, and accompanied them in their efforts to create awareness and later form an advisory group. In a word, Lee quickly became an ever-sought "champion". Says Lee, "I think any new initiative like this requires a champion and our work with the statewide advisory committee created a number of champions—besides me." He is now a contributing factor to the success of one of the nation's most successful pilot EDI projects, Project EASIER, involving all of Iowa's school districts. He helped to develop a communication plan that resulted in the production of a ten-minute video about EDI which has gained tremendous support for the Iowa project.

In addition to being the chief policy and financial analyst for the state's school finance system, Lee is currently a member of a National Center for Education Statistics task force on data confidentiality, a federal data coordination task force, and a task group developing a transaction set for exchanging institutional data (TS133). He has chaired several professional organizations and committees such as the National Forum on Education Statistics and the Education Information Advisory Committee to advocate EDI use among schools and districts.

Lee's words of wisdom? "I believe helping schools, districts and states to become EDI enabled will result in all of us having better information about education than we have ever had. I have always believed that better decisions result when timely and accurate information is available." Touché.

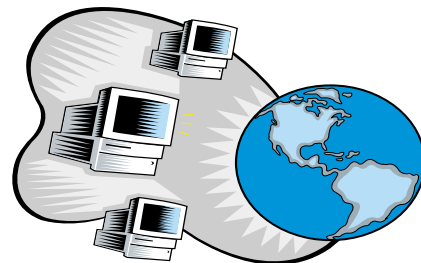


Postsecondary Electronics Standards Council Highlights

The following two articles appearing in this column are reprinted with permission from the Standards Council's web publication "The Standard."
Visit: ■ <http://www.standardcouncil.org/enews/index.htm> to view the **August 1998** newsletter in its entirety.

ETS Offers Test Score Reports in Standard Format

At the end of 1998, the Educational Testing Service began using Internet transmission to make GRE, SAT, and TOEFL scores available to participating institutions in the US and Canada, reports Pat Salava of ETS. These colleges and universities now receive test score reports quickly and securely over the Internet. PGP encryption software will be used to ensure security of the score data. Test scores will be transmitted in both the ETS proprietary format of each testing program and in TS 138 format, an EDI transaction set approved last year for reporting test scores. Institutions have been able to receive their test scores electronically through computer tapes, diskette and the IBM Advantis network for several years, but this new service gives them another option—one that is more economical. The institutions will be able to get their scores faster and possibly avoid the extra costs associated with handling paper reports. After processing the test scores, ETS staff will encrypt the data using an institution's unique PGP software key and place encrypted data on an anonymous server (one without an identifiable address) located at ETS. This triggers an e-mail, which is delivered to the school, informing the designated contact that the data are available. The e-mail contains a URL where the school may retrieve the data using a Web browser. The user then decrypts the data and processes it.



For more information on electronic score reporting, contact Jerry Murphy at:
■ jmurphy@ets.org.

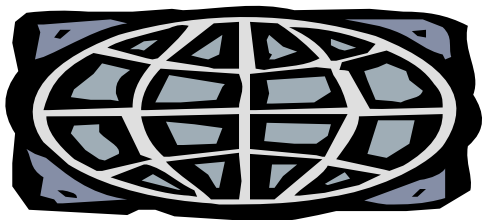
Free Encrypted Internet EDI Server (AKA The Texas Server)

Dave Stones of UT Austin reports that the use of the Internet EDI Server made available through his shop has matched the Texas weather this summer—hot! During July the server delivered 8830 transcripts and a total of 18,811 transaction sets. There were 47 senders and 66 receivers of these transaction sets. They are located primarily in Texas, Iowa, and Florida. Dave indicates that testing is taking place in a number of other states which plan on using the server, notably South Carolina, Utah, North Carolina, West Virginia and Georgia.

The Internet EDI Server has been in operation since the fall of 1996. It provides, free of cost to the education community, a way to send EDI transaction sets securely over the Internet. For more information on the Server, see the website at: ■ www.utexas.edu/student/giac/speede/ediserv.html.

Web Watch

*Here are some additional sites on informative
EDI and eCommerce resources*



■ <http://www.metronet.com/~rawlins/bookmag.html>

Maintained by Mike Rawlings of Rawlings EDI Consulting, this site offers reviews and recommendations for books and magazines about EDI.

■ http://www.aecpii.com/certify_titles.htm

This eCommerce site has a helpful list of job titles and descriptions to help you design your EDI roles once you decide to begin EDI implementation. The home page of the Association for Electronic Commerce Professionals International also has links to other helpful resources.

SPEEDE^{EXPRESS}
SPOTLIGHT
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Melissa LaRoe/ Jin Lee.....Editors
Joseph Bellofatto.....Graphic Designer

X12 Data Maintenance Summary

DM160298 (approved) – Code 'D – Equivalent Score' has been added to data element 1160 Test Score Qualifier Code to be used in the SRE Test Scores segment.



DM184298 (approved) – The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) was listed as the source of the codes for five data elements:

- 1252 Health Screening Type Code
- 1253 Immunization Type Code
- 1255 Disease Condition Type Code
- 1256 Medical Treatment Type Code

These are used in the health and immunization segments:

- HC Health Condition
- HS Health Screening
- IMM Immunization Status Code

CCSSO, however, no longer maintained those code lists and they are all subsets of the code lists currently maintained by the US National Center for Health Statistics, the American Medical Association, and the American Dental Association. The modification changes all four of the data elements to data element 1271 Industry Code and adds a matching data element 1270 Code List Qualifier Code to the end of the segment. In the case of the HC segment, two DE1270s were added. Five new codes were added to data elements 1270:

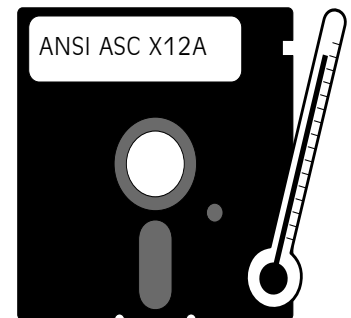
- AAU Diagnosis Encountered During Examination and Investigation of Individuals and Populations Code (Code Source 131)
- AAV Vaccination, Innoculation or Isolation Code (Code Source 131)
- AAW Immunization Injection Code (Code Source 133)
- AAX International Classification of Diseases Clinical Modification (ICD-9CM) Code (Code Source 131)
- AAY Current Dental Terminology (CDT) Code (Code Source 131)

DM189298 (approved) – In the MKS segment, the paired Syntax Note P0203 which required both Academic Grade Qualifier and Academic Grade be present was changed to a conditional Syntax Note C0302 which requires Academic Grade Qualifier when the Academic Grade is present but not the reverse. This coincides with usage for these two data elements in the CRS segment.

DM197298 (approved) – In order to indicate unusual testing conditions associated with all subtests test, data element 1159 was added to the end of the TST Test Score Record segment at position TST16. New code 'U – Exempt' was added to data element 1159 Test Score Interpretation Code and will be useful in both the TST segment and the SBT Subtest segment. -- Elsa Leslie

ANSI ASC X12 Subcommittee A Education Update

Four Data Maintenance Requests (DMRs) submitted by The American National Standards Institute Accredited Standards Committee X12 Education Administration Subcommittee (ANSI ASC X12A) were approved with the June 1998 ballot. Three other DMRs elicited a number of comments which required additional clarification. Two of these three received approval in October during the X12 trimester meeting. The seven changes would, therefore, be reflected in Version 4020 of the X12 Standards.



Transaction Set 132 - the Human Resource Record: The Human Resources Task Group (HRTG) met in June 1998 at the X12 trimester meeting and continued to meet via bimonthly conference calls in order to develop Transaction Set 132. Their work was presented for the first time to the Technical Assessment Task Group of the Education Subcommittee (X12A TG4) at the October X12 trimester meeting in Miami, Florida. Sadly, the HRTG must say adieu to chair, Mike Read, as his current work assignments will not permit attention to the development of TS132. He will be sorely missed and we wish him well. However, the task group has a wealth of knowledgeable members and we congratulate the newly elected chair, Barbara Andrepont, and vice-chair, Mary Pawasarat.

Transaction Set 133 - the Institutional Record: At the June 1998 X12 trimester meeting, the Institutional Record Task Group (IRTG) completed the identification of data to be included in the transaction set. This information has now been turned over to members of the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council to develop the initial transaction set structure. IRTG members reviewed the first draft at the October X12 trimester meeting in Miami.

-- Elsa Leslie

Elementary and Secondary

Texas

Education Service Center, Region 20 in San Antonio provides software for many school districts throughout Texas. They added the functionality of SPEEDE/ExPRESS to their software, complete with easy-to-use front end transaction processing. A pilot was conducted between January and June of 1998 among several San Antonio area school districts and various colleges and universities across Texas. The pilot was deemed a success and all participants agreed to begin using these electronic transcripts in a production environment.

For more information, please contact John McCauley at the Education Service Center, Region 20 via email at:

■ john.mccauley@esc20.k12.tx.us

Alaska

The On-line Alaska School Information System (OASIS) has come to a crossroad since the Alaska student data elements list/dictionary has been completed and the client server database has been built. There is now real data in the student category of the database that enables developers to examine and demonstrate some reporting features.

The results of a successful implementation of OASIS has become more important with a new law (Chapter 83, SLA 1998) passed by Alaskan legislature this session. The law requires the department to: 1) review and confirm or modify the new district cost factors from this law; 2) develop a methodology to identify and collect school level data vs. district level data to make funding decisions, identify exemplary schools, schools in distress, etc.; and 3) assess how effective students are learning in schools.

Several groups within the state have formed to identify potential staff, finance, and facilities data elements. The Alaska (AK) DOE hopes to meet with the state Retirement & Benefits division to identify whether the Department can collect electronically any source data about staff from their system, rather than have a district report duplicate data to AKDOE. The Department continues to review data elements from its Teacher Certification database for other source data that may be extracted.

Other tasks on the discussion board to be completed by June 1999 include making the OASIS efforts more widely known, thoroughly explaining the benefits of OASIS to district personnel and superintendents while gaining their support, and identifying the steps necessary for implementation at the district level.

Funding for implementation is limited, but many vendors recognize the benefits and are eager to assist in supporting districts in development and implementation.

A huge change for Alaska districts is the idea of non-aggregated data being sent to AKDOE. Previously, a district completed a report in an aggregated format and sent it to the AKDOE. The information would then be published at the state level. This method introduced error, data discrepancy, and a loss of confidence in the reports and data reported by the AKDOE.

For more information, please contact Brenda O'Donnell at 907-465-8651 or via email at:

■ brenda_odonnell@educ.state.ak.us



North Carolina

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, which oversees the state's K-12 public education programs, has released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a new comprehensive student information and accountability management system. Administrative and classroom/instructional management components will be combined with a data analysis/decision support system to give North Carolina's public schools powerful and comprehensive tools with which to manage their data and information needs. One of the requirements outlined in the RFP is the support for EDI and SPEEDE/ExPRESS for the exchange of transcripts with the UNC system as well as related student data movement among the schools. Most of the schools in the UNC system are ready to receive electronic high school transcripts from the North Carolina public high schools.

The State hopes to be able to award the contract for the new student information system in 1999, and state-wide implementation is expected to start in the 1999/2000 school year.

For more information on the K-12 public schools EDI initiative, contact Archie Cowan at the N.C. Department of Public Instruction via e-mail at:

■ acowan@dpi.state.nc.us



PostSecondary

North Carolina

The University of North Carolina (UNC) is currently implementing the use of EDI for the exchange of transcripts following its 1997 adoption of an articulation agreement with the 58 institutions of the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS). Fifteen of the 16 UNC institutions are now using EDI.Smart software.

As of December 1998, 12 of the 16 UNC institutions are registered with the UT-Austin server in test mode. The remaining four institutions should be registered with the server in 1999.

East Carolina University (ECU) is the pioneer in EDI for the UNC system. ECU uses the DARS software from the Miami University of Ohio with its own custom student information system. Fifty-six of the fifty-eight NC Community Colleges use the same software, which is written and maintained by the NCCCS central office to generate the TS130. When the NCCCS software has proved to successfully exchange transcripts between Pitt Community College and East Carolina, it will be made available to 55 additional North Carolina Community Colleges. This will give the 16 UNC institutions 56 trading partners. The other two community colleges will implement EDI on their own.

UNC Wilmington is developing the mapping from/to the SCT SIS Plus software, but progress was delayed until they completed their Y2K upgrade and the installation of the SCT web products. The SCT COBOL programs that do the mapping will be made available to the other 11 UNC institutions that use SCT's SIS Plus. These 12 SIS Plus institutions should have transcript receiving and sending capabilities fully integrated into their SIS systems by Fall 1999. The other three UNC institutions will implement EDI with their student information systems – UNC-G uses SCT Banner, UNC-CH uses the IDMS version of SIS, NCSU is now using the IDMS version of SIS but is moving towards PeopleSoft.

For more information on the UNC EDI initiative, you can contact Robert Hill at the UNC General Administration Office via e-mail at:

■ fh@ga.unc.edu

GLOSSARY

ANSI American National Standards Institute - founded in 1918, it is the coordinator for national standards in the United States, responsible for the identification of a single consistent set of voluntary standards.

DARS Degree Audit Requirements System - a software system developed by the Miami University of Ohio.

IDMS Integrated Data Management System - a relational data base product for IBM mainframe computers.

NCES National Center for Education Statistics - an organization within the U.S. Department of Education that has cosponsored the development and pilot usage of standards-based electronic information exchanges, beginning with the SPEEDE/ExPRESS initiative in 1989.

NCSU North Carolina State University at Raleigh

SCT Corporation a software and services company providing information management technology and enterprise solutions for higher education.

SIS Plus Student Information System Plus - software now sold by SCT that was originally developed by Information Associates in the 1980s. Used by 12 of 16 UNC campuses for their student information system.

UNC University of North Carolina (all 16 campuses unless city is specified)

UNC-CH University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

UNC-G University of North Carolina at Greensboro



Look for these and other exciting articles in the Summer Spotlight !

Case In Point

The final chapter of the 3-part feature on Iowa's Project EASIER concludes with "Building the Administrative Records Transfer Network." Learn about some common issues, challenges, and recommended solutions for institutions as they begin to build a trading partner network.

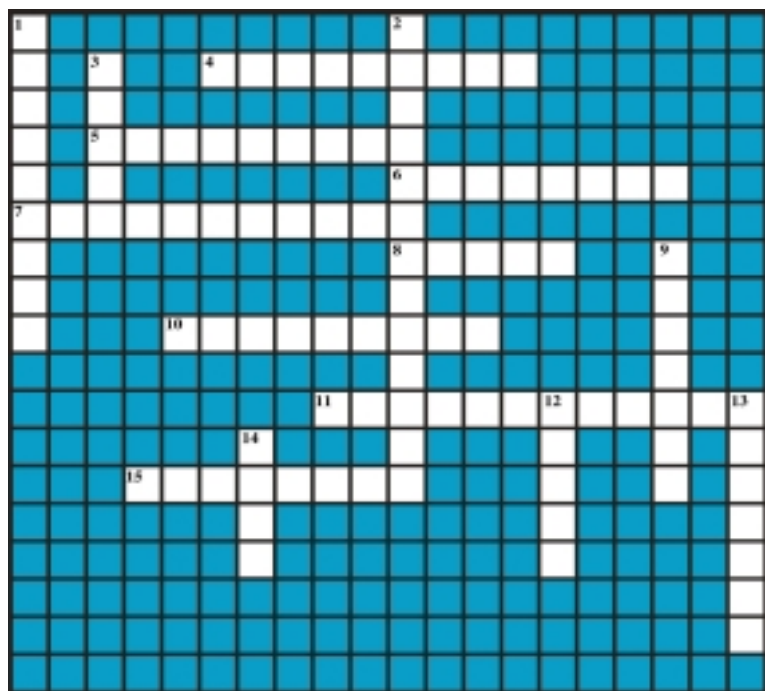
CHARLOTTE

Didn't get enough information from our Beta- testing announcement? Find out all the details behind the new WWW EDI server, including cost implications, functionality, development issues, and much more in the Summer 1999 Spotlight.

You may have noticed two of our regular columns missing from this issue of the SPEEDE/ExPRESS Spotlight.

"Conference Corner" and the "Vendor Spotlight" will continue to be covered. Please look for their return in the next issue.

SPEEDE/EXPRESSIONS



Across

- 4 Server undergoing testing.
- 5 Newly elected chair of the Human Resources Task Group
- 6 The title of the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council newsletter
- 7 ANSI ASC X12 process for keeping transaction sets current.
- 8 K12 EDI contact in North Carolina.
- 10 Need to be educated to ensure success in EDI implementation
- 11 Participants that will benefit from EDI
- 15 Needed to begin EDI implementation

Check out the solution on the SPEEDE/EXPRESS home page at:

■ <http://www.nces.ed.gov/edi>

Look for another great crossword in the next Spotlight issue!

Down

- 1 Establishes rules for sharing records between trading partners.
- 2 College and university educational sector
- 3 Site for October's ANSI ASC X12 meeting
- 9 Early adopter of EDI.
- 12 Desert watering hole
- 13 What EDI implementers need from management
- 14 A VIP in the implementation of EDI in Education.

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